

PHD IN FINANCE – PROGRAM OF STUDY

The PhD in Finance requires a minimum of eighteen graduate level courses, of which 6 at most can be transferred from relevant graduate courses at other schools or universities. Up to 4 courses per semester may be counted toward the overall requirement of 18 courses.

The 8 courses taken in the first year usually consist of one micro economic theory course, two economics courses or statistics courses as well as the first five finance core courses. In general, students complete all eight core courses during their first year.

The Finance Preliminary Examination is given once each year. All students enrolled in the Ph.D. program in Finance must take the preliminary examination immediately following their first year in the program. If a student fails the examination, the student may retake the exam the following year.

Preliminary Examination questions pertain to the material covered in four of the finance courses taken during the first year (FNCE 911, FNCE 912, FNCE 921 and FNCE 924). The preliminary examination is meant to test basic material and will be substantially related to these courses.

TWO PHASES OF THE PROGRAM

The program is divided into two distinct phases – Pre-Candidacy and Candidacy. Upon satisfying all pre-candidacy requirements, the student applies in writing to their Departmental Coordinator for admission to candidacy. The Coordinator will review the student's record and make a recommendation to the Vice Dean. Upon approval by the Vice Dean, the student is admitted to candidacy.

PRE-CANDIDACY

During the pre-candidacy phase, the student completes the required course-work, preliminary examination, and research papers.

Eighteen-Course Requirement

Transfer of Credit

Of the 18 course units of graduate work required for the doctoral degree, at least 12 units must be taken at the University of Pennsylvania. Students may receive up to 6 course credits for graduate work at other universities. A student who desires credit for previous course work should submit a written request to his or her Departmental Coordinator during their first year in the program. The Coordinator

will decide whether to grant credit based on the standards of the previous work and its relevance to the student's program.

Fall Semester – First Year

ECON 681 – Microeconomic Theory

This course can be substituted with ECON 700 and 701 for students who wish to study microeconomic theory at a deeper level. Prior approval from the PhD Coordinator is required.

FNCE 911-Financial Economics

This course will cover basic theories in finance: Asset pricing and portfolio choice.

FNCE 928 - Methods in Finance Theory

This course will cover topics in micro theory: basic game theory, moral hazard, and adverse selection and basic tools in continuous-time finance.

ECON 705 – Econometrics I (Fundamentals) or STAT 520 – Applied Econometrics I

Students must pass with a grade of B- or better.

Spring Semester – First Year

FNCE 912 – Corporate Finance and Financial Institutions

This course will cover basic theories in corporate finance, financial institutions and financial markets.

FNCE 921 – Introduction to Empirical Methods in Finance

This course will cover empirical asset pricing and empirical corporate finance.

FNCE 924 – Intertemporal Macroeconomics and Finance

This course will cover topics at the intersection of finance and macro.

ECON 706 – Econometrics II (Methods) or STAT 521 Applied Economics

Students must pass with a grade of B- or better

Finance Electives – 4 Course Requirement Over Second and Third Year

Each student is expected to develop proficiency in specialized areas in preparation for dissertation and research work. To this end, 4 or more finance electives are required from among the following courses:

1. FNCE 922 - Continuous-Time Financial Economics

2. FNCE 923 - Financial Economics under Imperfect Information
3. FNCE 925 - Topics in Asset Pricing
4. FNCE 926 - Empirical Methods in Corporate Finance
5. FNCE 932 – Topics in Corporate Finance
6. FNCE 933 – International Finance
7. FNCE 934 - Empirical Methods in Asset Pricing
8. FNCE 937 - Applied Quantitative Methods in Finance
9. FNCE 939 - Behavioral Finance

With 8 core course and 4 elective courses in finance, students will need 6 additional course credits to satisfy the course requirement for their Ph.D. Students can satisfy these additional course credits in the following ways.

1. Transfer Credits
2. Electives from Other Departments: Economics, Statistics, Accounting, Mathematics, etc.
3. Seminar Courses (FNCE 950): Students should limit seminar courses to a maximum of 3. These credits require students to attend the weekly seminar and write referee reports.

Preliminary Examination

The finance preliminary examination is given once each year, usually in June after the student's first year in the program. All students enrolled in the Ph.D. program in Finance must take the preliminary examination. If a student fails the examination, the student may retake the exam the following year. If a student fails the preliminary examination twice, the student will not normally be allowed to continue in the program as a Ph.D. student. The student may at the discretion of the examination committee, however, continue to complete the requirements for the Master's Degree in Finance.

Research Fellowship

Students are required to complete 2 research fellowships. The first may be performed in the first summer after the student's first year in the program. This may result in their first-year paper. The second may be performed in one semester in the second year. Research fellowship involves a semester-long work as a research assistant for approximately 10 hours per week.

Research assistant positions that are paid, do not count toward the student's research fellowship requirement.

All research fellowships and assistant positions must be approved by the PhD Program Coordinator.

Teaching Fellowship

Students are required to complete 4 teaching fellowships. They are generally completed in the student's third and fourth year in the program. A teaching fellowship involves approximately 10 to 15 hours per week.

Teaching assistant positions that are paid, do not count toward the student's teaching fellowship requirement.

All teaching fellowships and assistant positions must be approved by the PhD Program Coordinator.

First-Year Paper

All first-year students are required to write and turn in a first-year paper by September 30th of their second year. This may result from a research fellowship or a course taken in the first year.

Second-Year Paper Proposal

Students are expected to write and turn in a second-year paper proposal by May 15th of their second year in the program.

Second-Year Paper Presentation

The presentation of your second-year paper must be completed by September 30th of your third year in the program.

Third-Year Paper Proposal

Students are expected to write and turn in a third-year paper proposal by May 15th of the students third year in the program.

Third-Year Paper Presentation

The presentation of your third-year paper must be completed by September 30th of the student's fourth year in the program.

Teacher Development Program (TDP)

All PhD candidates in the Wharton Doctoral Programs are required to participate in a Teacher Development Program (TDP). The TDP is made up of two parts.

The first part, conducted in the first semester of classes in the student's first year, is a ½ day work shop on communication skills that is meant to both educate the doctoral student and make him/her aware of areas needed improvement. This workshop is mandatory and is part of the introduction to the Wharton Doctoral Programs.

The second part, a four-module TDP workshop, enables doctoral students to improve their presentation skills, with the intent of improving academic job placement. In particular, most students will use TDP to help improve their academic job talks when going on the job market.

Doctoral students are encouraged to participate in the four-module workshop in their third year or later, but in some cases departments may wish to have their second year students take it. Occasionally, waivers for the four-module workshop may be granted by a doctoral program coordinator under the following conditions:

- Significant prior college-level teaching experience (does not include current TA experience)
- Recognized teaching awards
- Accredited courses in pedagogy

The department waiver, if granted, must be registered in writing with the Wharton Doctoral office.

CANDIDACY

The candidacy phase comprises the preparation and defense of the dissertation proposal, doctoral dissertation and final defense of the dissertation.

Upon advancement to candidacy, each student is required to have a Dissertation Committee consisting of at least three faculty members (including at least two members of the Wharton graduate group), which may include the Supervisor/Advisor. The Dissertation Committee meets at least once annually with the student to review the student's progress. The student prepares an Annual Dissertation Progress Report. A copy of the signed progress report is submitted to the Supervisor/Advisor and Graduate Group Chair.

Dissertations based on joint work with other researchers are allowed, provided that, in such cases, a unique and separate dissertation is presented by each degree candidate. The candidate must include a concise account of his or her contribution to the whole work. Authorship of a dissertation by more than one degree candidate is not allowed.

Dissertation Proposal Defense - Fifth Year Funding

To be eligible for consideration for a fifth-year merit-based grant, a student must successfully present a dissertation proposal prior to May 15th of the student's fourth year. The Ph.D. Coordinator and the Department Chair will determine the allocation of funds among eligible students. While it is possible that funds will be equally divided among qualified students, this outcome is not guaranteed. Decisions will be based solely on considerations of merit; thus some eligible students may not receive grants while others may receive grants of varying dollar amounts. Any compensation for teaching assistance is unrelated to this merit-based grant. Students who receive a merit-based grant may, in addition, receive compensation for teaching assistance.

Time Limitations

Students must complete all course work, preliminary examinations, and the dissertation requirement within 16 terms, (excluding summer) eight-year period from the date of their matriculation, excluding leaves of absence. Except in unusual circumstances, students will be expected to gain admission to candidacy status prior to the end of their fourth year in the program (excluding leaves of absence).

If a student has not completed all requirements for the Ph.D. (including deposit of the dissertation) at the end of the fifth year after beginning dissertation candidacy, he or she must submit to the full dissertation committee, within two months of completing that fifth year, a copy of all written work completed to date on the dissertation. If the student is unable to construct such a committee, he or she can be dropped from the doctoral program.

Employment While In The Program

Students in the Wharton Finance PhD Program are not allowed to accept employment without first receiving approval from the Wharton Finance PhD Coordinator. The implications of not requesting and receiving approval can be severe. The student could lose their good standing status in the program and this could result in their being asked to leave the program immediately.

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